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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the rising phenomenon of one-parent, female-headed households in Georgia, identifies family service needs of these families, and explores availability of services. Female-headed families account for 16.4% of all families in Georgia, making it second-highest in the nation. From 1970 to 1980, the number of female-headed families living below the poverty level there increased by 32%. Census data are used to identify 26 (of 159) Georgia counties with higher numbers of households headed by females under age 35 and with children under age 6, and to determine the available day-care services in these counties. Eight of the 26 counties are metropolitan, the rest being more rural, where job opportunities are limited. The need for infant care is critical. The number of female-headed families apparently is increasing with female providers tending to be young and less educated. The relationship between children and employment is also a critical issue, with the lack of adequate child care forcing many female-headed families to live in poverty. One federal program used as an alternative to day care is the Headstart program. In the 26 "high" counties, the ratio of female-headed families to available Headstart placements ranges from 1.7 to 12.6 families per opening. Policy recommendations include consideration of the female-headed household as a new, permanent family form, and the suggestion that policies keep better pace with changing societal needs. This paper contains 24 references. (TES)

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# Female Headed Families in Georgia: Policy Implications

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## FEMALE HEADED FAMILIES IN GEORGIA: POLICY IMPLICATIONS

When people talk about the family, they usually are referring to the "traditional family" composed of a married couple and at least one child (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1983). However, adherence to the narrow traditional definition of family excludes a significant number of people and other types of family structures. Additionally, only 11 percent of American families fit the traditional family, that of male worker with a homemaker wife and two children (Washington, 1988). In fact, two-parent families declined by five percent during the last decade and according to the Census Bureau these numbers will continue to decrease (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1983).

While the more traditional grouping of the family is declining, other types of families have increased. The largest growth has been in the number of families consisting of a lone parent maintaining a household with one or more of his or her own children. The one-parent family with a child under 18 years of age and no spouse present, has more than doubled from 3.2 million in 1970 to 6.7 million in 1984. In a fifteen year period, one-parent families with children has increased by 107 percent (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1983).

As the number of one-parent families with children increases, the data also indicates the age of the parent is decreasing and family income is barely above poverty level. This situation is further complicated by the relationship between children and employment in the one-parent family. In order for the parent to support his/her family, he/she must have access to family services. Because of the rapidly changing character within American families renewed attention is being given to non-traditional family units. This paper will consider the one-parent family unit of female-headed families in Georgia. Secondly, we will identify specific service needs of this family unit and explore their availability.

Female-Headed Families Defined

In order to consider the phenomenon of increasing numbers of female-headed families it is important to understand the U.S. Census Bureau's categorization and definition of household and family. The Bureau identifies two major categories of households: (1) non-family household and (2) family household. Household is defined as: the primary householder owning or renting the housing unit which is being occupied. A non-family household consists of one person who either lives alone or with someone to whom the householder is not related. A family household is defined as a household consisting of two or more persons related by marriage, birth or adoption. Among family households, three major types have been identified: married couple families, families with

female householder (no husband present) and male family householders (no wife present). As noted earlier, this paper will consider the one-parent family, more specifically the census category of families with female heads of household (no husband present) with children.

National Trends

During the last decade the increase in divorce and pre-marital birth has replaced widowhood as the major cause for one-parent families. Divorced mothers maintaining families increased by nearly 300 percent from 1970 to 1984 and now account for 46 percent of the mother-child families. The escalating rate of pre-marital births between 1970 and 1980 has contributed to an alarming 500 percent increase in families maintained by never married mothers (Norton and Glick, 1986). This group now represents 20 percent of the mother-child families. Experts estimate " that 45 to 50% of all children will live in a single parent family for a significant period of time before they are 18 years of age" (Glick and Norton, 1980: p.21).

Another example of the change in the national family structure is in 1970 no state had over 15 percent of female-headed households; whereas, six years later the states of Mississippi, Georgia, New York, Louisiana, North Carolina and Alabama all had 15 percent or more female-headed households. The majority of female-headed households reside in the central cities, while approximately one-

third live in the adjacent suburbs and the rest live in non-metropolitan or rural areas (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1983). While the number of one-parent families is increasing, the average age of the provider for female-headed families is declining. The median age has decreased from 37.2 years in 1970 to 34.6 years in 1984 (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1983). Furthermore, the size of the family appears to be correlated to the age of the mother. Females under the age of 25 have an average family size of 2.67, while female family heads aged 25 to 34 have an average of 3.04 family members. Due to the trend of decreasing age of the female householder, a recent study found that pre-school children were present in 85 percent of the families maintained by women under 25, and in about 50 percent of the families with females 25 to 34 years of age (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1983). Concomitantly, this particular family structure is disproportionately concentrated among blacks. In fact, one-half of all black children under 18 are currently living with a lone mother as compared to one-sixth of all white children under 18. In addition, the educational attainment of female-headed families is typically less than high school, with less than half not completing high school (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1983).

Clearly, the presence of an increasing number of one-parent families who are younger and less educated, influences the ability of a female to provide for her family. The consequence of the relationship between children and employment is a critical issue

facing female-headed families. For women under 35 years of age and maintaining families with children, their ability to enter the labor force and support their families is often inhibited by access to adequate child care for their children. This constraint forces many female-headed families to live in poverty. There are two reasons for higher poverty rates with this family structure. First, the high cost of raising children and second, the female-headed providers disadvantage in the labor market (Pearce, 1986). Eighty percent of all female-headed families in the United States have incomes of $19,000 or less, with the majority (58%) living on incomes of under $10,000 (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, 1983). Only 38 percent of the female-headed households are able to find full-time year-round work and typically only at minimum wage (Pearce, 1986). Moreover, in 15 states, a mother with two children is better off on a combination of welfare and food stamps than working full-time at a minimum wage job (U.S. News and World Report, 1988). From this discussion, it is apparent that female-headed families with children hold a disadvantageous position in society relative to other family groups. As noted earlier, this is due, in part, to the mother being young, having less education, and living near the poverty level. The situation is further complicated by the lack of available services for this family structure. In other words, family services that are designed around the more traditional family unit do not necessarily meet the needs of the one-parent

family. Thus far, we have reviewed the national trends and now turn to state-wide information on female-headed families.

State Trend

While the national statistics point to a marked trend towards more female-headed households, these statistics do not adequately reflect specific patterns of change statewide. Georgia ranks second in the nation for the number of female-headed families as percentage of all families. Similarly, this non-traditional family unit accounts for 16.4 percent of all families in Georgia.

Within Georgia, the majority of household providers of female-headed families are 44 years of age or under. Data indicates that there is a larger percentage of providers under 34 years than between 35 and 44 years of age. Furthermore, the number of female-headed households with children under 18 years of age has risen dramatically between 1970 and 1980. This population experienced a 77 percent increase (the metropolitan counties of Georgia increased 118 percent and non-metropolitan counties increased by 97 percent) during the last census. Reflecting the national trend, economic self-sufficiency remains difficult for female-headed families. From 1970 to 1980, Georgia's female-headed families living below the poverty level increased by 32 percent. In addition, a report from the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (1987) on welfare dependency, states that a family with Aid to Family with Dependent Children

(AFDC) benefits receives only 61 percent of the poverty level. The report further indicates that long-term recipients are more likely to have given birth as a teenager, to have more than one child, and to have never been married.

Aside from Georgia's female-headed householders being younger, having children and living near the poverty level, their access to the labor market is restrained by the association between offsprings and the mother's desire to support her family. Often the female householder is not in the work force because of the lack of services that are necessary for this non-traditional family. The services that are essential are intertwined in the relationship between children and employment. The service needs range from job opportunities above a minimum wage level, access to job training, transportation, medical care for the family to adequate day care programs.

One solution to the dilemma between children and employment in female-headed families is to provide affordable, quality day care services. The availability of day care at least enhances the female-headed family's ability to pursue employment or training; this would be impossible without such services. On the other hand, day-care has constraints due to increasing costs. A recent Public Television Special reports that the expense of day-care in Georgia ranges from $50 per week to over $100 per week. "The typical cost of full-time care is about $3000 a year for one child,

or one-third of the poverty level income for a family of three" (GA PTV, 1988). For female-headed families entering the labor force at minimum wage jobs, the cost of day care is prohibitive and would negate any earnings the female might receive. Moreover, the majority of day care centers cater to those who can afford these services. Another problem is assessing the availability of day care for low income families in Georgia. Licensing information from the Office of Regulatory Services does not specify licensed day-care centers which may have sliding fees. Because of the lack of this information, many female-headed householders are forced to look for substitutes that can provide some day-care services. This may take the form of using relatives or friends homes, leaving the child alone for long periods of time, or finding a program that can afford some day-care benefits.

One of the programs that low income families do use as a replacement for day-care centers is the federally funded Headstart program. Headstart is funded through the Office of Children and Youth and is a pre-school program for four and five year olds. The operating hours range from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and the admission is based on income. While the Headstart program is designed as a preschool program, it has also become an alternative day-care center for many. This is due to the income admission criterion and the fact that there are few available child care centers for low income families.

The overview of both the national and state-wide trends point to the fact that the number of female-headed families are increasing at an alarming rate. The female providers of this family unit tend to be young, less educated and often not in the work force. It was further revealed that the female provider's ability to enter the labor force is related to the predicament of not having available family services for this non-traditional family unit. If affordable day-care service is available, the female provider can stay in the work force. More importantly, because most have to work, affordable quality child care is critical to their survival and to the survival of their families.

From the review of the national and state information on female-headed families, there is a need for specific information on this emerging non-traditional family unit. To date, information is not available as to which counties in Georgia have large numbers of female-headed families and whether specific family services are available. The family service to be investigated will be the availability of day-care. Because of the lack of statewide information on either private or public day-care centers with sliding fee scales, Headstart placements will be used as an indicator of the availability of affordable child care services for families headed by females. While we realize that Headstart is <u>not</u> a day-care program, for many low income families it is used as an alternative.

In summary, the purpose of this study is twofold. First, we will explore the question of which counties in Georgia have higher numbers of families headed by females. Secondly, to what extent in these counties is there provided the fundamental service of available day-care to families headed by females.

## Methods

Framework and Measurements

Data are available for secondary analysis that can explore the question of whether a portion of the state has higher numbers of families headed by females, and if there is available child care to these families. The data for this study are derived from the U.S. Bureau of the Census reports Characteristics of the Population for 1980 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1983) and Head Start data for 1987 (Department of Health and Human Services). This data provides information for the state of Georgia by county on specific characteristics of female headed families and Head Start Centers.

From the previous definition of female headed family, it was mentioned that this includes both a female and her children and a female who has a relative living with her such as a mother or sister. Since this study is interested in the family structure which involves a female with her children, we employed several measures that insure this sample will be considered.

The measures that are of theoretical importance are ones that pinpoint a family unit with a female who heads the household and has children. The variables used to create this are female headed households with children under six years of age; families headed by females who are under 35 years of age; mean income of all

female headed family households; and the total households that are headed by females. The decision was made to focus on children under six years of age because of the six year age limit of the Headstart program.

Together these four measures were used to identify the counties with the unique family unit of a low income female-headed householder with children under six years of age. Measures for all 159 counties were entered and standardized scores created; this allows a comparison between urban and rural counties. All four measures for each county were rank ordered and then each category was divided into high, medium or low. This was based on the standard deviation of each category. For example, a county was considered in the high category if the mean income of the female-headed household was one standard deviation below the state mean. For this study, the category of high is of major interest. The sample group is composed of counties which rank high in all four measures.

Validation of Sample Group

To further validate the use of these four measures, two other social indicators were considered. The assumption made in such a selection is the existence of a strong correlation between certain sociodemographic and socioeconomic characteristics and the existence of certain needs (Bloom, 1981; Eaton, 1981; Dohrenwend, 1975). Social indicator data can provide a means of evaluating the

general climate of an area as it relates to identifying the need for resources.

The first set of indicators is based on Warheit, Holzer and Robbin's (1979) work. Warheit and his associates successfully validated the utility of a set of fifty-two social indicators of which establish a measure of relative need for mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse intervention and prevention services. The program, the Prolog Project, provides each of the 159 counties in Georgia a standardized score which ranges from least in need to most in need of prevention and intervention services.. A county classified as in most need is defined as one which is inadequate in comparison with surrounding counties. We would expect some counties with a high number of non-traditional families to be in the range of most need.

Low birth weight is the second indicator used to substantiate whether the high category counties, represented as having large numbers of female headed households, are suitable. This social characteristic provides an indication of the total spectrum of health care services for a county. Additionally, low birth weight rates indicates the degree to which prenatal health care is available. A high incidence of low birth weight for a county implies there are barriers to accessing the health care system. Again, we would expect counties ranked in the high category to have increased rates of low birth weight.

Available Day Care

After identifying counties that are high in female-headed families, we then examined to what extent, in these counties, are there available day-care services. The availability of sufficient day care plays a critical role in a female-headed family with children. Adequate day-care programs enable women to work.

Since there is neither a national nor state day-care program, we will consider Headstart, which is a federally funded preschool education program. While Headstart is not a day-care program, low income mothers often use it as a day-care facility. Additionally, admission into the program is based on family income. With the current federal guidelines, the female-headed family in the high category would be eligible for Headstart. For this study, we considered whether the number of Headstart Center placements are sufficient for the female-headed families residing in a county. One way to assess whether this program is available to the non-traditional family is to divide the number of placements in the Headstart Centers by the number of female-headed households with children under six years of age. This provides a ratio of how many female-headed families there are for every Center placement.

The final part of the second research question answers whether the available day-care in the high category counties are keeping pace with this emerging non-traditional family unit. In order to do

this, we compared the state ratio of female-headed families per Headstart placements with the ratio of those counties with higher rates of female-headed families. If a ratio is equal or less than the state ratio, then we assume that available day-care has kept pace with some needs of these non-traditional families.

Findings

Table 1 presents general descriptive statistics on selected information. Overall, the state average income for female-headed households is $7,978 per year while the average income for female-headed households for counties in the high category if $7,029 per year. It is interesting to note that 48.8% of all female-headed families with children in Georgia are located in counties assigned to the high category. Likewise, Headstart openings in the designated high category counties account for 38.4% of the statewide Headstart openings.

Our findings do specify 26 counties were assigned to the high category, as shown in Figure I. This indicates these counties have a high number of families headed by females who are under 35 years of age, have children under six years of age, and a lower income than the state average. The majority of counties are located in the southern half of the state with a general concentration in the southwest and upper southeast. With the exception of five counties, all counties are situated in non-metropolitan areas.

To further verify that these counties are appropriate, two other characteristics were also reviewed. The first, the Prolog Project, provides an indication of mental health service needs. The range extends from least need (Range I) to most need (Range IV). Low birth weight is used to identify obstacles to accessing the health care system in a county. Table II summarizes the result of these social indicators. In Column 1, 54% of the counties are in Range IV. This implies that these counties are in most need of prevention and intervention services. Column 2, demonstrates that the majority of counties assigned to the high category have low birth weight rates higher than the state rate of 8.1 per 1000 live births. In fact, 81% of these counties have higher rates than the state. From these results, the 26 counties assigned to the high category are consistent with specific social characteristics and the existence of certain needs.

A second focus of this study is to examine the availability of day-care services of counties with a higher rate of female-headed families. The major question is to what extent is there the fundamental service of day-care which can help guarantee economic security.

Table III highlights the results of the number of female-headed families to available Headstart placement. Column 1, lists the number of Headstart placements for each of the high category counties. Only one county, Crisp, does not have a Headstart

Program. Column II, reveals the number of female-headed families with children under six. As would be expected, the metropolitan counties have the greater number. The third column indicates the ratio of female-headed families to the number of Headstart Center placements. In other words, this ratio represents the number of female-headed families for every Center placement.

Table IV gives the rank order of ratio of female-headed families to available Headstart placements. Crisp has the largest ratio due to the fact that no Headstart Center is available. Counties that have Headstart range from Fulton County which has 12.6 families for every Center opening to Colquitt County which has 1.7 families for every opening.

Another way of considering whether the available day-care program in the high category counties are keeping pace with the non-traditional families is to compare the mean ratio of female-headed families to available Headstart placements in the high category with the mean ratio of all counties with female-headed families and Headstart programs. Table III presents the results of the two groups. The mean of the ratio for high category counties is 5.02, whereas the mean of the ratio of all counties with Headstart programs is 4.14. This indicates the high category counties have five families waiting for every available Headstart opening while all counties with Headstart programs have an average four families waiting for every preschool education opening. These results

indicate that as a whole, counties in the high category group have one more female-headed family per Headstart placement as opposed to all other counties with a Headstart program.

In regard to whether the available day-care programs in counties with high categories are keeping pace with the other counties, we return to Table IV. The rank order indicates the number of female-headed families for every available opening for each county. While the mean ratio for this group is higher than the state, there are 13 counties that have ratios below the state average of 4.14. This ranges from Liberty with four families for every opening to Colquitt with 1.7 families for each place. To answer the final part of the second research question, we assume that the available day-care program, Headstart, has kept pace in 13 counties. On the other hand, there are 13 counties which are above the state mean ratio. This ranges from Thomas at 4.2 families for each opening to Fulton with 12.6 families per opening. Figure II indicates the counties with Headstart programs that appear to have kept pace with the needs of the non-traditional family and those that have not kept pace with the emerging female-headed families.

**Table I**

**Descriptive Information**

**on Female Headed Families**

| | All Counties | High Category Counties | % of Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Income | 7978 (N=159) | 7029 (N=26) | N/A |
| Female Headed Families | 49130 (N=159) | 23993 (N=26) | 48.8% |
| Head Start Openings | 9535 (N=102) | 3662 (N=25) | 38.4% |

**Table II**

**SELECTED SOCIAL INDICATORS**
**OF THE**
**HIGH CATEGORY COUNTIES**

| | Prolog Range[a] | Low Birth Weight Rates[b] (< 5 1/2 lbs.) |
|---|---|---|
| Counties | | |
| Ben Hill | IV[c] | 5.2* |
| Bibb | II | 10.2 |
| Bulloch | II | 8.5 |
| Burke | IV[c] | 8.3 |
| Chatham | II | 9.6 |
| Coffee | IV[c] | 9.6 |
| Colquitt | IV[c] | 10.6 |
| Crisp | IV[c] | 9.5 |
| Decatur | IV[c] | 10.3 |
| Dougherty | IV[c] | 8.1 |
| Fulton | III | 10.3 |
| Grady | IV[c] | 9.3 |
| Jefferson | IV[c] | 10.1 |
| Laurens | II | 9.5 |
| Liberty | III | 6.1* |
| Lowndes | IV[c] | 7.9* |
| McDuffie | II | 10.9 |
| Mitchell | IV[c] | 13.9 |
| Muscogee | III | 8.8 |
| Peach | II | 9.3 |
| Thomas | IV[c] | 7.6* |
| Tift | IV[c] | 8.1 |
| Toombs | II | 7.2 |
| Walton | II | 7.4* |
| Ware | III | 8.5 |
| Washington | IV[c] | 9.5 |
| Georgia | | 8.1 |

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[a]Range IV most in need
(Range I to IV) I= least in need IV= most in need
*Counties having low birth weight rates below State average
[b]1987 data
[c]1986 data

Table III

## FEMALE HEADED FAMILIES/DAY CARE RATIOS

| COUNTY | Number of Placements in Head Start Programs | Number of Female Head of Families with Children under 6 years | Ratio of Number of Families per Placement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ben Hill | 54 | 154 | 2.8 |
| Bibb | 258 | 1,869 | 7.2 |
| Bulloch | 54 | 200 | 3.7 |
| Burke | 90 | 273 | 3.0 |
| Chatham | 398 | 2,509 | 6.3 |
| Coffee | 108 | 234 | 2.2 |
| Colquitt | 180 | 304 | 1.7 |
| Crisp | 0 | 262 | 262.0 |
| Decatur | 125 | 270 | 2.1 |
| Dougherty | 425 | 1,559 | 3.6 |
| Fulton | 810 | 10,244 | 12.6 |
| Grady | 72 | 150 | 2.1 |
| Jefferson | 36 | 224 | 6.0 |
| Laurens | 36 | 315 | 8.7 |
| Liberty | 72 | 288 | 4.0 |
| Lowndes | 90 | 677 | 7.5 |
| McDuffie | 18 | 188 | 10.4 |
| Mitchell | 72 | 235 | 3.2 |
| Muscogee | 216 | 2,197 | 10.2 |
| Peach | 54 | 235 | 4.3 |
| Thomas | 90 | 376 | 4.2 |
| Tift | 54 | 307 | 5.7 |
| Toombs | 36 | 235 | 6.5 |
| Walton | 54 | 175 | 3.2 |
| Ware | 180 | 338 | 1.9 |
| Washington | 80 | 175 | 2.9 |
| TOTAL | 3,662 | 23,993 | $\bar{x}$=5.02 |

**Table IV**

**Rank Order of Ratio of Female Headed Families to Available Head Start Placements**

| COUNTY | Ratio of Number of Families Per Placement |
|---|---|
| Crisp | 262.0* |
| Fulton | 12.0 |
| McDuffie | 10.4 |
| Muscogee | 10.2 |
| Laurens | 8.7 |
| Lowndes | 7.5 |
| Bibb | 7.2 |
| Toombs | 6.5 |
| Chatham | 6.3 |
| Jefferson | 6.0 |
| Tift | 5.7 |
| Peach | 4.3 |
| Thomas | 4.2 |
| Liberty | 4.0 |
| Bulloch | 3.7 |
| Dougherty | 3.6 |
| Walton | 3.2 |
| Mitchell | 3.2 |
| Burke | 3.0 |
| Washington | 2.9 |
| Ben Hill | 2.8 |
| Coffee | 2.2 |
| Decatur | 2.1 |
| Grady | 2.1 |
| Ware | 1.9 |
| Colquitt | 1.7 |

*No Head Start Center

**Table V**

**Mean Ratio and Standard Deviation of High Category Counties with All Other Head Start Counties**

| | Mean Ratio | STD |
|---|---|---|
| High Category Counties (N=26) | 5.02 | 2.88 |
| All Counties with Head Start Programs (N=102) | 4.14 | 3.18 |

# Female Headed Families / Children under Six

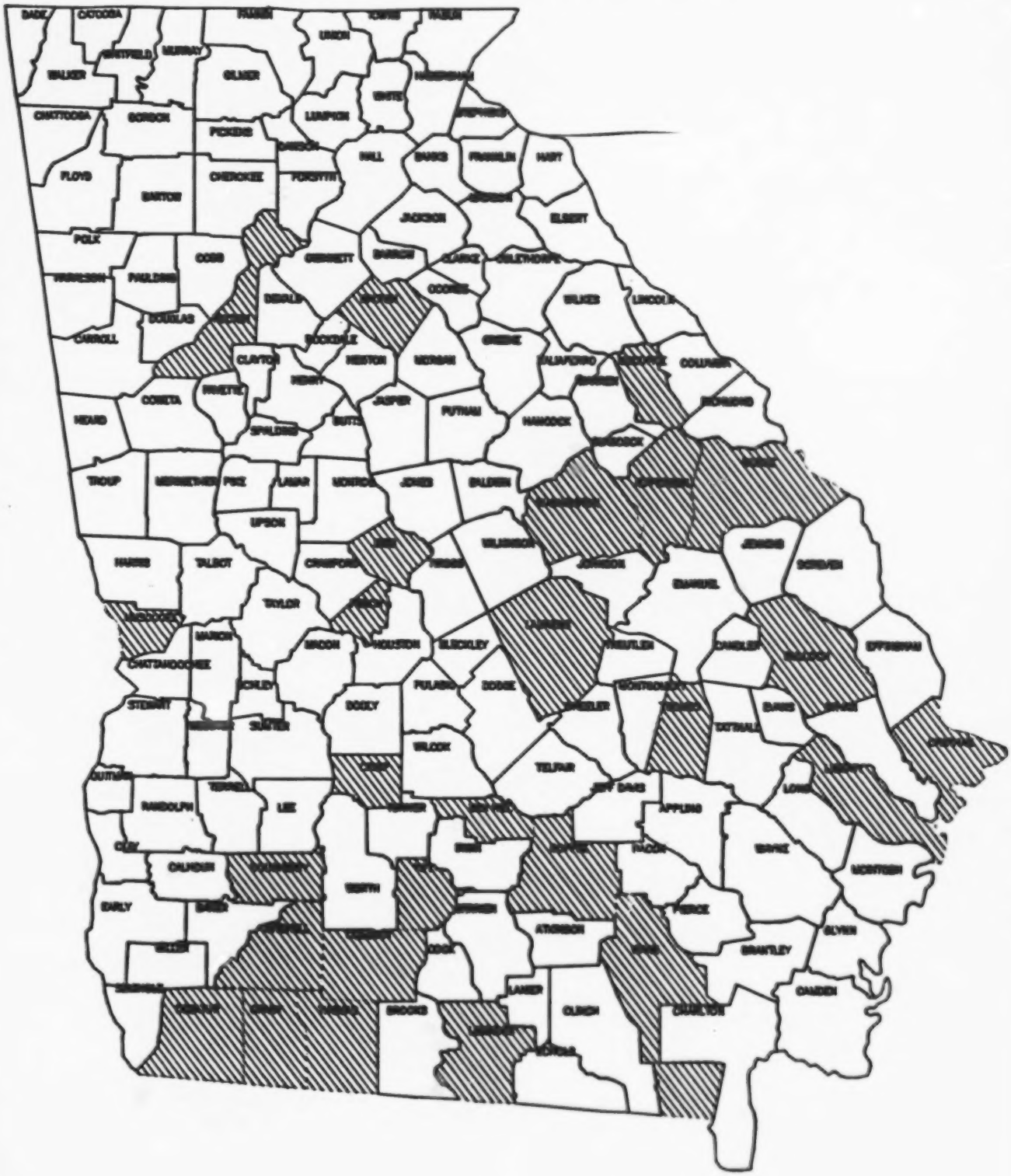


Figure I

HIGH CATEGORY

# Female Headed Families / Children under Six

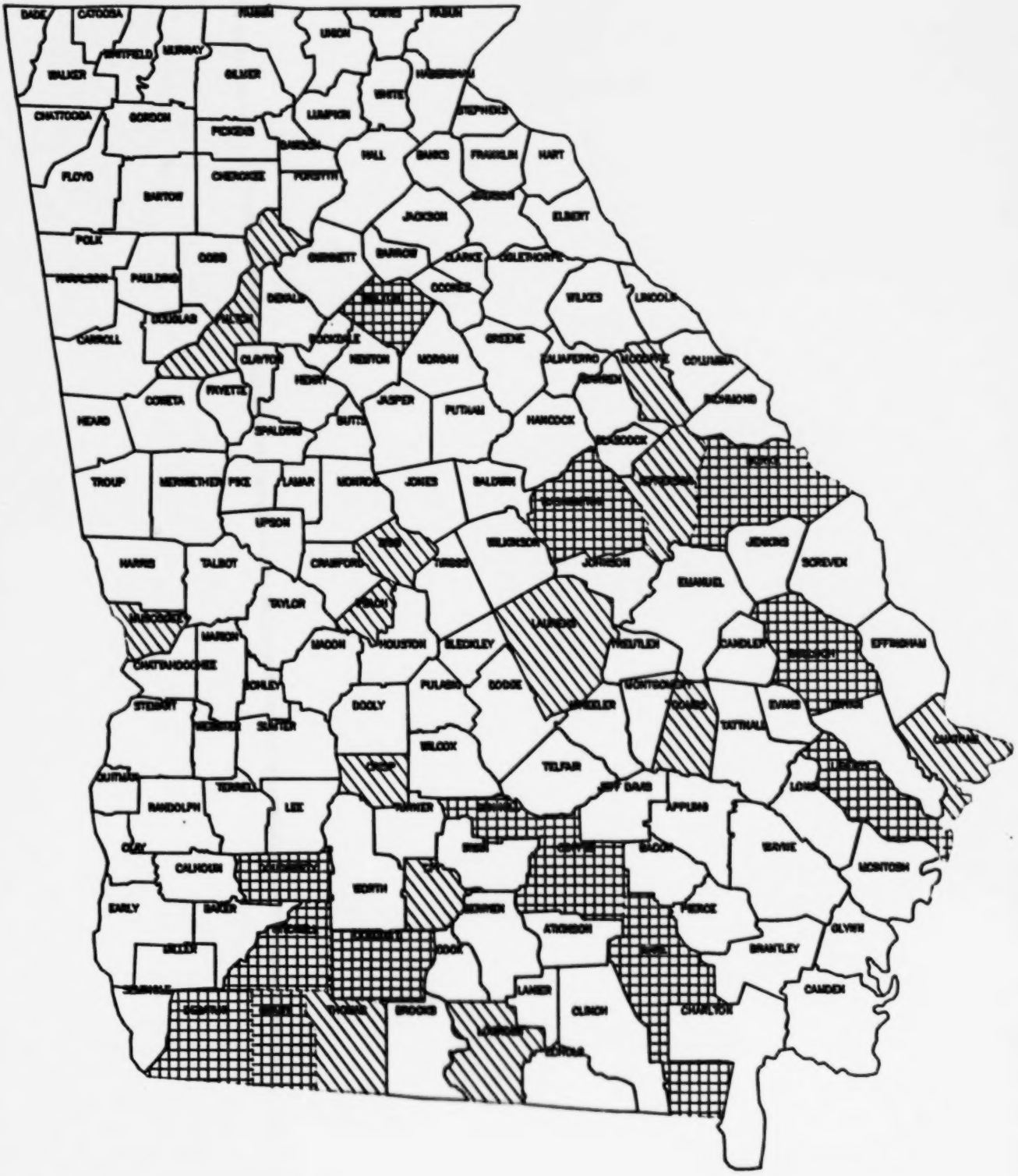


Figure II

**DISCUSSION:**

There are two major questions that this study sought to answer. While knowing that Georgia has a high percent of families headed by females, are there particular locations in Georgia were these families are more dominant than other? Additionally, to what degree, in the counties with high numbers of female-headed families, is there available day care services?

In answer to the first question, the findings indicate that 26 counties out of 159 counties did have larger numbers of families headed by females who are under 35 years of age, with children under six years of age, and an income below the state average. These identified high category counties represent 41% of Georgia's female-headed families, 47% of the state's families headed by females under 35 years, and almost half (48.8%) of the female-headed families with children under six. Further, the income of these non-traditional families is $949 less than the average income for all other female-headed households in Georgia.

What, if any, do these twenty-six counties have in common that makes them different or unique? Among the twenty-six counties, eight counties are Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) counties. Only three counties in the high category are suburban counties while the other five counties contain the core cities of Atlanta, Macon, Columbus, Savannah, and Albany. The remaining eighteen

counties are non-metropolitan counties or counties that are more rural. Since there are both metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties identified, the high category counties in Georgia are not indicative of either a metropolitan or non-metropolitan phenomenon. With only three suburban counties identified, counties with central cities and the non-metropolitan counties have the greater share of female-headed families. Geographically, most of the counties are located in the southern half of the state below a line that connects the cities of Columbus, Macon and Augusta. In addition, 14 of the 26 counties had a high percentage (33% or more) of black population. However, not all of the counties with high percentages of black population in Georgia have high concentrations of black female-headed families. In other words, in Georgia female-headed families are not necessarily concentrated in counties with high black population.

It is increasingly clear based upon national research and this study that female-headed family represent not only a shift away from the traditional family, but whose income is substantially lower. Considering the counties that contain the central city, the female-headed families may very well represent the inner-city resident who either works at a minimum wage job, or may be a welfare recipient. This is indicated by the fact that all of the counties, except one, exceeded the state average in 1982 of families on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments. Even though jobs may be more abundant within the

metropolitan areas, the lack of education, job skill, and transportation still may prohibit these families from becoming economically self-sufficient.

Female-headed families located in rural counties may have even more problems than the urban female-headed families. While the rural female provider may also lack job skills, education, and transportation, the general economic condition of these rural counties are more limited in terms of job opportunities. The economy in the rural communities often shows a greater share of dollars earned from agriculture, but the dollars earned does not translate into more jobs as readily as other sectors in the economy such as manufacturing. Sixteen of the 18 nonmetropolitan high category counties were more agriculturally oriented with gross agricultural incomes of at least ten percent of the total personal income. Furthermore, traditionally, agriculture is a male dominated industry. Therefore, job opportunities for females are more limited in a rural county where agriculture plays a larger role than other industries. In addition, one of the two remaining counties is more forestry oriented, which is similar to agriculture; while the other county is dominated by a military base. forestry oriented, while the other is dominated by a military base.

While military bases afford job opportunities for local residents, the jobs are service-related. Service-related jobs are generally

low wage and often have few benefits. Another area creating service jobs are secondary educational institutions and vocational-technical schools. One-half of the counties have at least one or more such facilities located there.

Manufacturing job opportunities in the high category rural counties do provide for female employment since many of the manufacturing firms are textile and apparel firms; however, such jobs are again traditionally low wage jobs. It should be noted that a mother with a minimum wage job, working full-time, does not earn enough to support herself and one child above the poverty level for a two person family (Pearce, 1986).

Although job opportunities are essential for the female provider, the problem of family services, especially day-care, can be of a more urgent nature. Presently, the parents of children that need child care are faced with a triple quandry: day-care is hard to find, difficult to afford and often of poor quality (Time, 1987). Waiting lists at good facilities are so long that parents apply for a spot months before their children are born. For the low income family and single parents, the problem is worse. Subsidized day care is very scarce and the waiting lists get longer as the number of female-headed families increase. As noted before, families are forced to consider substitutes that afford some day-care assistance. Because Headstart programs are often used as a

makeshift day-care operation by female-headed families, Headstart placements was used as an indicator of available day-care services.

The results indicate that all but one of the 26 counties that ranked high in female-headed families have a Headstart program. The ratio of female-headed families to available Headstart placements range from 12.6 families per Center opening in the metropolitan county of Fulton to 1.7 families per Center opening in the rural county of Colquitt. It should be remembered that this ratio is based on the number of families per opening and not number of children. As noted earlier, the average family size for a female provider age 25 to 34 is 3.04 (1 parent, 2 children). This indicates that for Fulton County the ratio of 12.6 families per placement suggests that there may be over 25 children for every placement while Colquitt county may have a little over three children for every placement.

When comparing the mean ratio of female-headed families in the high category to the 102 counties with Headstart programs, we found that an average of five families are waiting for every Headstart placement in the high category counties whereas the other counties have only four families for every Headstart placement. This means that in the high category counties there are ten children for every Center placement while the other counties have eight children for every Center placement. The consequence of the difference between the number of children per placement in the identified high

category counties and the other Headstart program counties testifies to the critical need for more day-care services in the 26 counties.

Finally, when comparing the high category county ratios with the ratios of the Headstart counties, we found that half of the counties were above the state ratio and the other half were below. Initially, we noted that if the ratio was equal or less than the state ratio, we assumed that available day-care had kept pace with some of the needs of the families headed by females. With this in mind, this points to the fact that 13 counties, with high female-headed families, have kept pace with the number of Headstart placements while 13 counties have not. Of the 13 counties below the state average of 4.14 families per Center placement, eleven were non-metropolitan and two were metropolitan counties. Of the two metropolitan counties, one was the core MSA county of Dougherty, and the other was a suburban county. Generally, the non-metropolitan counties appear to provide more Headstart placements that can be used as substitutes for day-care.

Even though Headstart placements are used as a measure of the availability of affordable day-care services for families headed by females, it is evident that this has its limitations. A federal pre-school program cannot adequately serve as a day-care center, although it does assist many in this way. What is needed is more subsidized child care facilities. In Georgia, less than half of

the counties offer help for child care to working poor families. And even in counties with subsidized care, more than 6,500 families are on waiting lists for existing positions (Reed, 1987). Of the counties with high female-headed families, over half (57%) have subsidized child care placements. These range from 20 placements in Burke County to 2,568 placements in Fulton County.

While we have considered a program for four to six year old children, the need for infant care is even more critical. One-half of American mothers return to work before the child's first birthday. Most do so because of the need for salaries to make ends meet. Currently, in Georgia, there are less than 300 subsidized slots available for infants throughout the state (Reed, 1987).

Unfortunately, despite the need for increased resources for day-care, it is unlikely that there will be an expansion of services. Due to federal funding cuts, current local day-care budgets were cut by 10 percent this past year. In inflation-adjusted dollars, funding for direct day-care subsidies for low and middle income families has dropped by 28 percent. As a result subsidized centers can no longer afford to provide either the quality or the quantity of services offered in the past.

The state of Georgia as well as the U.S. lags behind almost every other industrial nation in offering an adequate child-care system. More than 100 other countries have national policies, and many

European countries have extensive networks that are comprehensive systems. In an effort for this country and the State of Georgia to develop a comprehensive policy and move towards providing quality day-care, we offer the following recommendations:

1. Policy makers need to consider female-headed families as a new family form rather than one that is either deviant or temporary.
2. Public policies need to keep better pace with the evolving work force and the changing needs for family services. A few states have devoted considerable resource to improving child-care, while most have done virtually nothing. Thirty-three states have lowered their standards and reduced enforcement for licensed day-care centers. Twenty-three states now provide fewer children with day-care than in 1981 (Time, 1987).
3. The Headstart program should be funded to serve not only as a pre-school, but also as a day-care facility with hours that serve the working mother.
4. Single mothers who are working for minimum wage should be given priority at Headstart programs for day-care space. Additionally, priority should be given to those involved in job training or educational programs.
5. Government programs that touch the lives of these mothers should be coordinated and integrated in such a manner that maximum benefits can be obtained.

6. The 26 counties in Georgia that were identified as having high numbers of families headed by females should be given additional monies and resources for more subsidized day-care programs. The 11 counties without subsidized day-care should be a top priority for funding.
7. Earlier, it was noted that over half of the high female-headed family counties have either a vocational-technical school or a secondary education facility. Female providers in these counties should be provided job training or educational programs.
8. We encourage government, business and industry to work together to develop creative solutions. Employers need to consider on-site day-care centers as a part of teh employee's benefit package. Businesses that have made the investment in child-care find that it reduces turnover and absenteeism. The Children's Defense Fund contends a recent survey show that parents lose an average eight days a year from work because of child-care problems and nearly 40% consider quitting (Time, 1987). The State of Massachusetts is leading the way in integrating the child-care system. The state has worked out a program with employers, school boards, unions and non-profit groups to encourage the expansion and improvement of child-care facilities. Small companies and groups can receive low-interest loans from the state to build day-care facilities. Further, funds that are earmarked for

creating centers in statewide referral network serves both individual parents and corporations looking for child-care.

9. We strongly urge that the Act for Better Child Care (ABC) be passed by Congress. ABC would authorize $2.5 billion per year through 1992 to help states improve the quality of child-care. Additionally, it would make child-care more affordable for low-income families and increase the number of facilities and qualified staff. It also establishes minimum health and safety standards. Ultimately, the monies would help states create a responsible system. As more women in Georgia enter the work force, the trend of female-headed families will increase as well as the need for family services. One important service that is critical, is available and affordable day-care. Experts agree that within ten years the number of children under six who will need daytime supervision will grow more than 50 percent. The State of Georgia must develop ways of resolving the child-care dilemma for those families that want and are able to be a part of the work force.

Endnotes.

**Prolog**

1. Sociodemographic Indicators

1. 1980 Total Population
2. 1980 Percent Single-parent Head of Household with children under 18
3. 1980 Percent Population 65 Years Old and Older
4. 1980 Percent Population 17 Years Old and Under

Socioeconomic Indicators

*5. 1980 Median Family Income
*6. 1980 Median Income of Unrelated Individuals
7. 1980 Percent Families Below Poverty Level
8. 1980 Percent Unrelated Persons Below Poverty Level
9. 1980 Percent Persons Below Poverty Level
10. 1980 Percent Households with Public Assistance
11. 1980 Percent Youth Ages 16-19, Not High School Graduate, Not in School
*12. 1980 Percent Persons 25 Years Old and Older with 4 Years High School
*13. 1980 Median Years of School Completed
14. 1980 Percent Youth Ages 16-19, Not HS Grad., Not Enrolled, Not Employed
*15. 1980 Percent White Collar Workers
16. 1980 Percent Blue Collar Workers
17. 1980 Percent Service Workers
18. 1985 Percent Labor Force Unemployed

Housing Indicators

*19. 1980 Percent Owner-Occupied Housing Units
20. 1980 Percent Renter-Occupied Housing Units
21. 1980 Percent Vacant Housing Units
22. 1980 Percent Housing Units Built Before 1940
*23. 1980 Median Value of Owner-Occupied Non-condominium Housing
24. 1980 Percent Owner-Occupied Units with Value Less than $10,000
25. 1980 Percent Rental Units with Rent Less than $50 per Month
26. 1980 Percent Housing Units Lacking Some Plumbing
27. 1980 Percent Units with Substandard Heating
28. 1980 Percent Units Lacking Complete Kitchen Facilities
29. 1980 Median Persons per Unit
30. 1980 Percent Housing Units with More than 1.01 Persons per Room

Crime Indicators

31. 1982 Homicides per 1000 Population
32. 1982 Rapes per 1000 Population
33. 1982 Robberies per 1000 Population
34. 1982 Assaults per 1000 Population
35. 1982 Burglaries per 1000 Population
36. 1982 Larceny per 1000 Population
37. 1982 Motor Vehicle Thefts per 1000 Population
38. 1982 Arson per 1000 Population
39. FY82 Cases Referred to Juvenile Courts per 1000 Persons Age 10-16
40. FY83 Juvenile Court Commitments per 1000 Population Under Age 18

Health Indicators

41. 1981 Mortality Rate per 1000 Population
42. 1982 Infant Deaths per 1000 Live Births
**43. 1983 Miscarriages and Stillbirths per 1000 Live Births

Special MH/MR/SA Indicators

44. 1982 Suicides per 1000 Population
45. 1983 Teenage Suicides per 1000 Population Under Age 17
46. 1982 Divorces per 1000 Population
47. 1981 Births to Unwed Mothers per 1000 Live Births
**48. 1983 Immature Births per 1000 Live Births
49. 1982 Cases with Child Protective Services Provided per 1000 Population under 18
**50. 1984 Reported DUI Arrests per 1000 Population
**51. 1982 Alcohol-Related Traffic Accidents per 1000 Population
**52. 1983 Chronic Liver Disease Mortality per 1000 Population
**53. 1982 Alcohol and Drug Related Deaths per 1000 Population

*Inversely Related to Need
**Alcohol and Drug Indicators

2. The following is a list of the counties that are high in female-headed families and the number of subsidized day-care positions in these counties.

| County | Title XX/ Subsidized Day-Care Positions |
|---|---|
| Ben Hill | 0 |
| Bibb | 88 |
| Bulloch | 0 |
| Burke | 20 |
| Chatham | 494 |
| Coffee | 0 |
| Colquitt | 0 |
| Crisp | 0 |
| Decatur | 47 |
| Dougherty | 60 |
| Fulton | 2,568 |
| Grady | 25 |
| Jefferson | 0 |
| Laurens | 174 |
| Liberty | 91 |
| Lowndes | 49 |
| McDuffie | 0 |
| Mitchell | 27 |
| Muscogee | 244 |
| Peach | 70 |
| Thomas | 0 |
| Tift | 30 |
| Toombs | 0 |
| Walton | 33 |
| Ware | 0 |
| Washington | 0 |

FOOTNOTES: [1]Pearce, Diana, "Women and Children in Poverty," Southern Changes, February - March, 1986, p.2.

[2]Whitman, David, "America's Hidden Poor," U.S. News and World Report, Jan. 11, 1988, p.20.

[3]Walles, Claudia, "The Child-care Dilemma," Time, June 22, 1987, p.57.

[4]Reed Barbara, "Work or Welfare?" Atlanta Constitution, February 5, 1987.

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